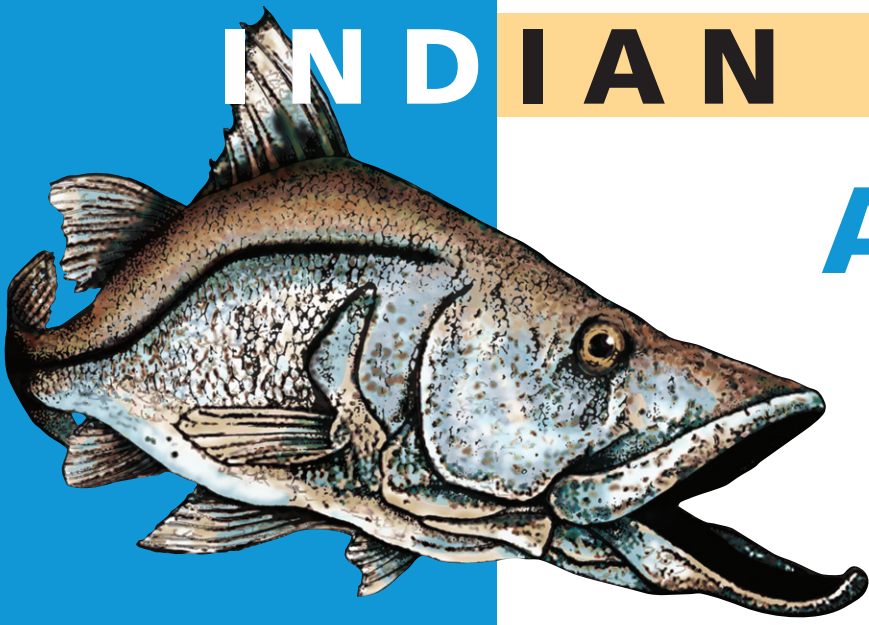


INDIAN RIVER LAGOON

An overview of the North Feasibility Study



Studies could increase lagoon funding

Top: Dawn greets an early morning stroller on one of the many public docks on the Lagoon.

Bird: The wood stork (*Mycteria americana*) is one of the listed species that makes its home in the lagoon.

Bottom: Representatives of local, state and federal government agencies, various groups and interested persons regularly meet to discuss challenges to the lagoon and develop possible solutions.

As part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program (CERP), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has initiated feasibility studies to design and evaluate restoration projects for the southern and northern portions of the Indian River Lagoon.

The Indian River Lagoon South Restoration Project, which targets the portion of the lagoon in St. Lucie and Martin counties, was initiated in 1998 by the Corps and the South Florida Water Management District, the local sponsor for this project. The recommended project developed through this study includes construction of extensive water storage and stormwater treatment areas, acquisition and restoration of natural storage and treatment areas, “muck” removal and habitat creation. The South Project Implementation Report was completed in August 2002 and is under congressional consideration for authorization and funding.

The Indian River Lagoon North Feasibility Study was initiated in 2002. This study targets the portion of the lagoon in Volusia, Brevard and Indian River counties, with the St. Johns River Water Management District as the local sponsor. Similar to the South Feasibility Study, the North Feasibility Study could incorporate both natural and constructed water storage and stormwater treatment areas as key elements of the recommended project developed by this study. The study should wrap up in 2007, with submission to Congress for consideration for authorization and funding anticipated in 2008.

Both the north and south studies have incorporated the goals and objectives of the Indian River Lagoon Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) and the Indian River Lagoon Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) plan into their studies. Both studies could be considered implementation of the SWIM Plan and CCMP as they use information and direction provided by these documents to develop specific projects designed to address problems identified in the plans. Many of the projects are regional in scale, with associated costs that would be difficult for local or state agencies to assume without federal assistance.

More information about these studies may be found at the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Web site at www.evergladesplan.org.

Where is the Study Area?

The Indian River Lagoon North Feasibility Study area includes portions of Volusia, Brevard and Indian River counties. The study area stretches for approximately 128 miles from Ponce de Leon Inlet to Fort Pierce Inlet and includes the Indian River Lagoon, tributaries to the lagoon and the lagoon’s watershed. The northern portion of the Indian River and all of the Mosquito Lagoon and the Banana River are included in the study area. The Atlantic Ocean, ocean beaches and the St. Johns River and its watershed are not included in the study area.

The remaining portion of the lagoon in St. Lucie and Martin counties has been addressed in the Indian River Lagoon South Restoration Study.

Why is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Involved?

Both the Indian River Lagoon north and south studies are elements of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. The restoration plan, in turn, is linked to the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Project. The C&SF Project is a multipurpose project first authorized by Congress in 1948 to provide flood control and services to enhance water quality and water supply to much of Florida, south of Orlando. While the C&SF Project accomplished many of its original goals, there were significant impacts to the integrity, health and productivity of many important ecosystems in central and south Florida. A recent study of the C&SF Project and its impacts to these ecosystems by the Corps and other agencies resulted in the development of CERP. CERP was authorized by Congress in 2000.

The primary links between the lagoon and the C&SF Project are the various canals draining to the lagoon, constructed as part of the C&SF Project. These canals include C-23, C-24, C-25 and C-44 in the lagoon’s south study area and C-54 in the lagoon’s north study area.

Other non-C&SF federal projects in the lagoon basin include the Intracoastal Waterway and several port, inlet and navigation projects. These projects may be evaluated as part of the lagoon’s North Feasibility Study.

How do Various Lagoon Restoration Plans Relate to the New Study?

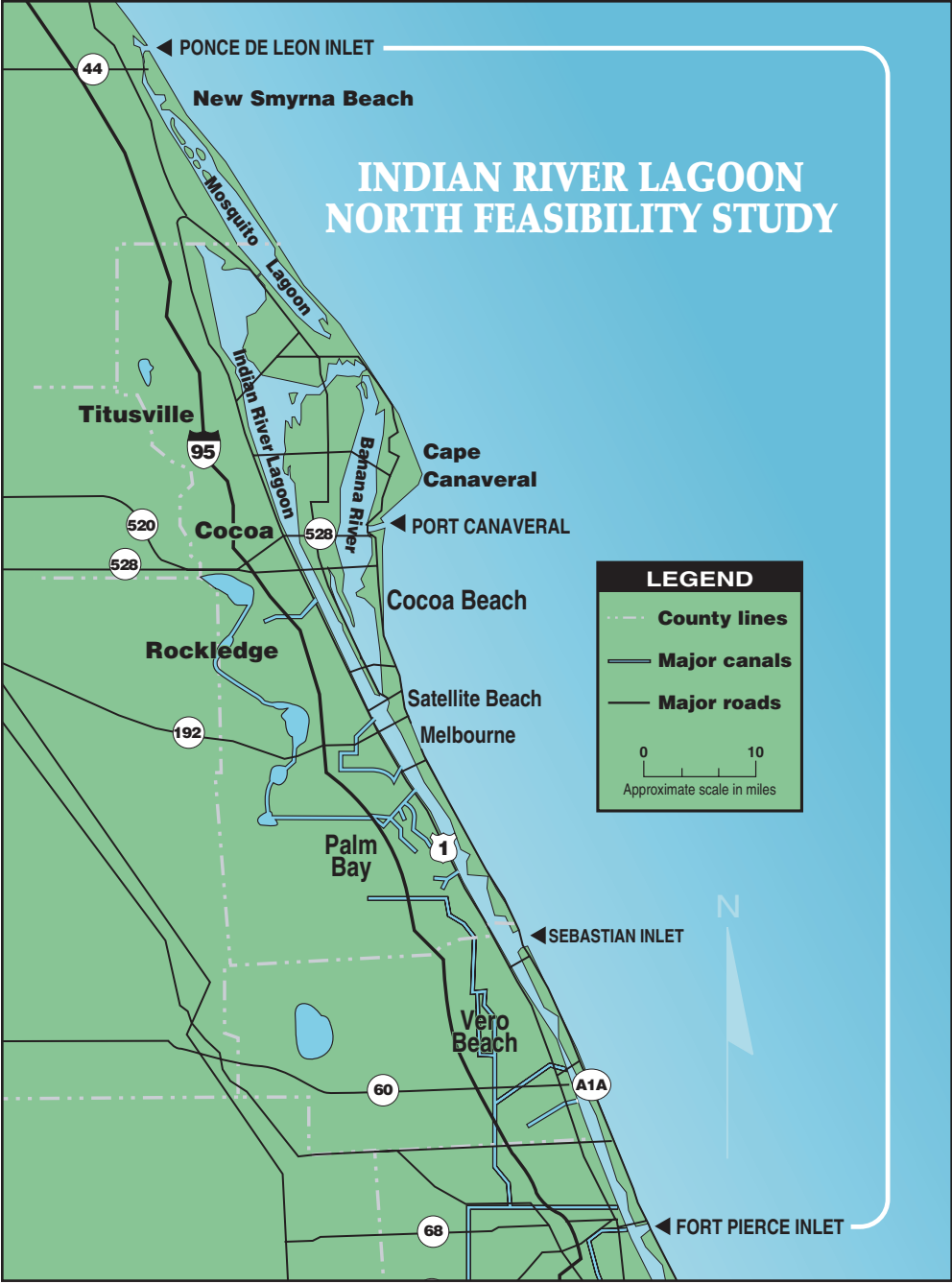
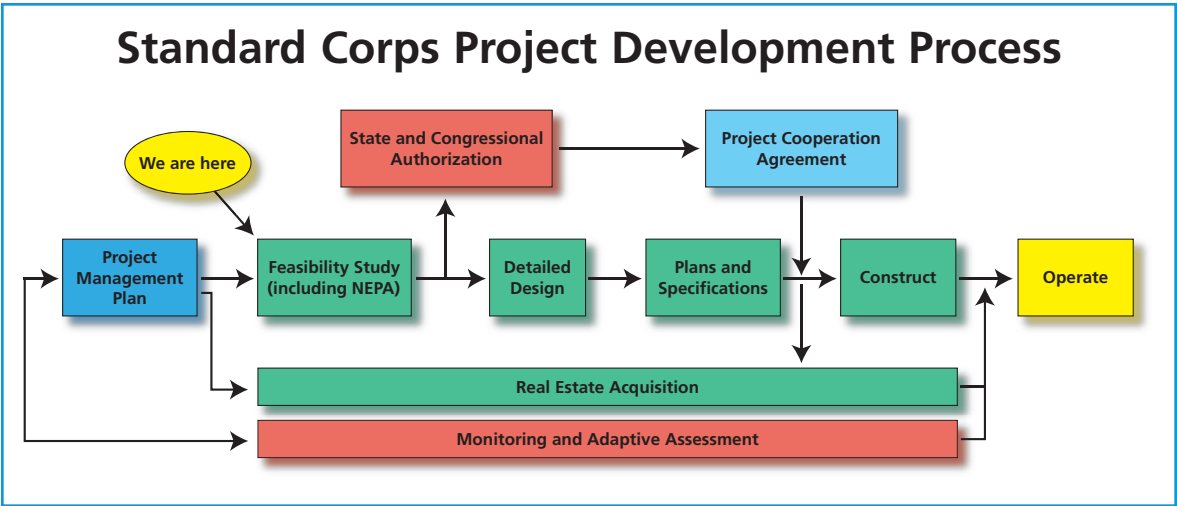
Significant amounts of time and effort have gone into the development of the lagoon SWIM Plan and the lagoon National Estuary Program (NEP) CCMP. The goals and objectives of these plans are reflected in the goals and objectives developed for this study and will continue to provide primary guidance for the study as it progresses. Similarly, the data collected during the development of these plans will be essential in assessing various alternatives developed during the study.



How Does the Process Work?

Any project seeking federal funding through the Corps must follow a standard project development process (as illustrated in the accompanying chart). Presently, the Indian River Lagoon North Project has completed a Project Management Plan and is initiating a feasibility study. The lagoon North Feasibility Study is scheduled to be complete in 2007. Congressional authority for projects identified in the feasibility study will be sought through the Water Resources Development Act of 2008. Funding will be provided through subsequent legislation.

In addition, as required by the National Environmental Protection Act, development of the lagoon North Feasibility Study is being coordinated with state and federal resource management agencies. These agencies have been contacted to seek their comments and recommendations as restoration alternatives and performance measures are developed.



What is the Present Status of the Lagoon North Feasibility Study?

The lagoon North Feasibility Study was initiated in August 2002. Presently, performance measures are being developed to evaluate the effectiveness of restoration activities. These measures will be primarily based on the health and extent of important natural resources in the lagoon, such as sea grass. Projects are also under way to model the response of the lagoon and its resources to various restoration alternatives in order to compare the effectiveness of these alternatives. Coordination with various state and federal resource management agencies, as required by the National Environmental Protection Act, has been initiated as well.

Several presentations about the study have been given to various civic groups. Public comment on the study has been taken at meetings of the lagoon north project delivery team, and public information materials have been developed and distributed. Additional presentations, opportunities for public review and comment, and informational materials are anticipated as the study moves forward. To learn more about study progress and upcoming meetings, check the CERP Web site at www.evergladesplan.org.

What is the Schedule for the Study?

Identification of problems and opportunities	2003
Development of performance measures	2003
Identification and development of evaluation models	2003
Formulation of alternative plans	2004
Evaluation of effects and comparison of alternative plans	2005
Alternative formulation public meeting	2005
Selection of recommended plan	2006
Draft feasibility report/public review	2006
Draft feasibility report public meeting	2006
Final feasibility report	2007
Final feasibility report public meeting	2007
Water Resources Development Act of 2008 (Congressional authorization to construct)	2008

Projects would be varied under the feasibility study



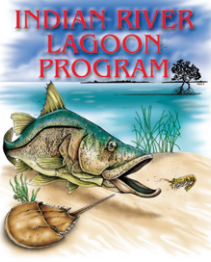
Some of the ongoing efforts to protect the lagoon that could be expanded through the feasibility study include the dredging of “muck” from area waterways, building of regional stormwater ponds, monitoring of habitat and wildlife, and opening of mosquito impoundments.



For more information



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